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Review Article

AN AYURVEDIC AND MODERN VIEW OF DYSMENORRHOEA (*KASHTARTAVA*)

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ABSTRACT:

Dysmenorrhoea is a medical condition of pain during menstruation. Menstrual pain which is severe enough to limit normal activities is termed as Dysmenorrhoea (*Kashtartava*). Dysmenorrhoea is the most common Gynaecological problem faced by women due to abnormal anatomical and functional aspect of uterus, psychosomatic factors, release of Prostaglandins, Pelvic congestion etc. Dysmenorrhoea can be correlated with *kashtartava* or conditions like *Udavartini Yonivyapada* in Ayurveda. It is *Tridoshaj vyadhi* with *Vata* Predominance. There is dearrangement of *Apan* and *Vyan vayu* along with vitiation of *Rasa dhatu*. In present day life women are effectively facing challenges encountered by stressful life resulting in *Mithya Aahar Vihar*, over exertion and malnutrition. This may direct to *Vikruti* in *Rituchakra* leading to various *Vyadhi* allied to menstruation. Ayurveda recommends *Ritucharya* and *Dincharya*, Diet modulation and Yoga in the form of *Aasanas*, *Pranayama* and Meditation on a regular basis so as to alleviate Dysmenorrhoea effectively.

KEY WORDS: *Kashtartava*, *Udavartini*, Dysmenorrhoea, Primary dysmenorrhoea, Secondary dysmenorrhoea.

INTRODUCTION:

The term Dysmenorrhoea is derived from the greek words Dys(difficult, painful or abnormal), Meno(month) and Rrhoea(flow). It refers to severe, painful cramping sensation in the lower abdomen often accompanied by other biological symptoms including sweating, tachycardia, headache, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and tremulousness occurring just before or during the menses.

Modern view: Dysmenorrhoea means painful menstruation

Classification : -1) Primary 2) Secondary

- Primary Dysmenorrhoea:- is the pain associated to ovulation cycles, without demonstrable lesions that affect the reproductive organs. Primary dysmenorrhea is related to myometrial contractions induced by prostaglandins originating in secretory endometrium, which result in uterine ischemia and pain.
- Secondary Dysmenorrhoea:- is the pain associated with ovulatory cycles caused by a demonstrable pathology.

In terms of hormones, medical science proposes that Primary dysmenorrhoea is caused by excess production of Prostaglandins (hormones like

chemicals that regulate uterine contractions) following a decline in progesterone levels.

Excess estrogen, which boosts fluid and salt retention, can worsen the situation. At least 10 percent of young women have symptoms that are so severe, that they cannot participate in normal activities. Besides lower abdomen pain, cramp sufferers may also experience backache, pinching, and pain sensations in the inner thighs and mood swings.

Differential diagnosis:

A. The most important differential diagnosis of primary dysmenorrhoea is secondary dysmenorrhoea.

Secondary dysmenorrhoea

- 1) Adenomyosis
- 2) Uterine myoma
- 3) Endometriosis
- 4) Endometrial polyps
- 5) Obstructive malformations of the genital tract

B. Sudden onset of dysmenorrhoea

- 1) Pelvic inflammatory disease
- 2) Unrecognised ectopic pregnancy
- 3) Spontaneous abortion

C. Other cause of pain

- 1) Chronic pelvic inflammatory disease
- 2) Pelvic adhesions
- 3) Irritable bowel syndrome
- 4) Inflammatory bowel disease
- 5) Interstitial cystitis

Symptoms of Dysmenorrhoea

- Spasmodic menstrual pain
- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea or constipation
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Disorientation
- Hypersensitivity to sound, light, smell and touch, fainting and fatigue

DISCUSSION:

In Ayurvedic classics all gynaecological problems are described under the umbrella of *Yonivyapada*. The disease '*Kashtartava*' is not described in classics as well as in vedas as an

individual disease entity. Though it is a symptom of various *Yonivapadas* specially *Udavarta*, *Vatala*, *Sannipatika* etc.

Kashtartava is a *tridoshajavyadhi* with *vata* predominance. In *Kashtartava* there is derangement of *Apana* and *Vyanavayu* along with vitiation of *Rasadhatu*.

Kashtartava can be compared with dysmenorrhea on the basis of its signs and symptoms.

Artava :- A substance of the body which flows out at the specific period of time is called as *Artava*. A substance which flows out from *Apatya marga* without pain, burning and sliminess is known as *artava*

Kashtartava:- *Kashtartava* (dysmenorrhea) is not separately described as a disease. But there are many diseases in which *Kashtartava* is considered and described as a symptom

Nirukti :- The term *Kashtartava* is made of two words *Kashta* and *Artava*.

Kashta:- Painful, Difficult, troublesome, ill, forced, wrong, unnatural, a bad state of thing.

Artava:- Belonging to reasons, period of time, menstruation.

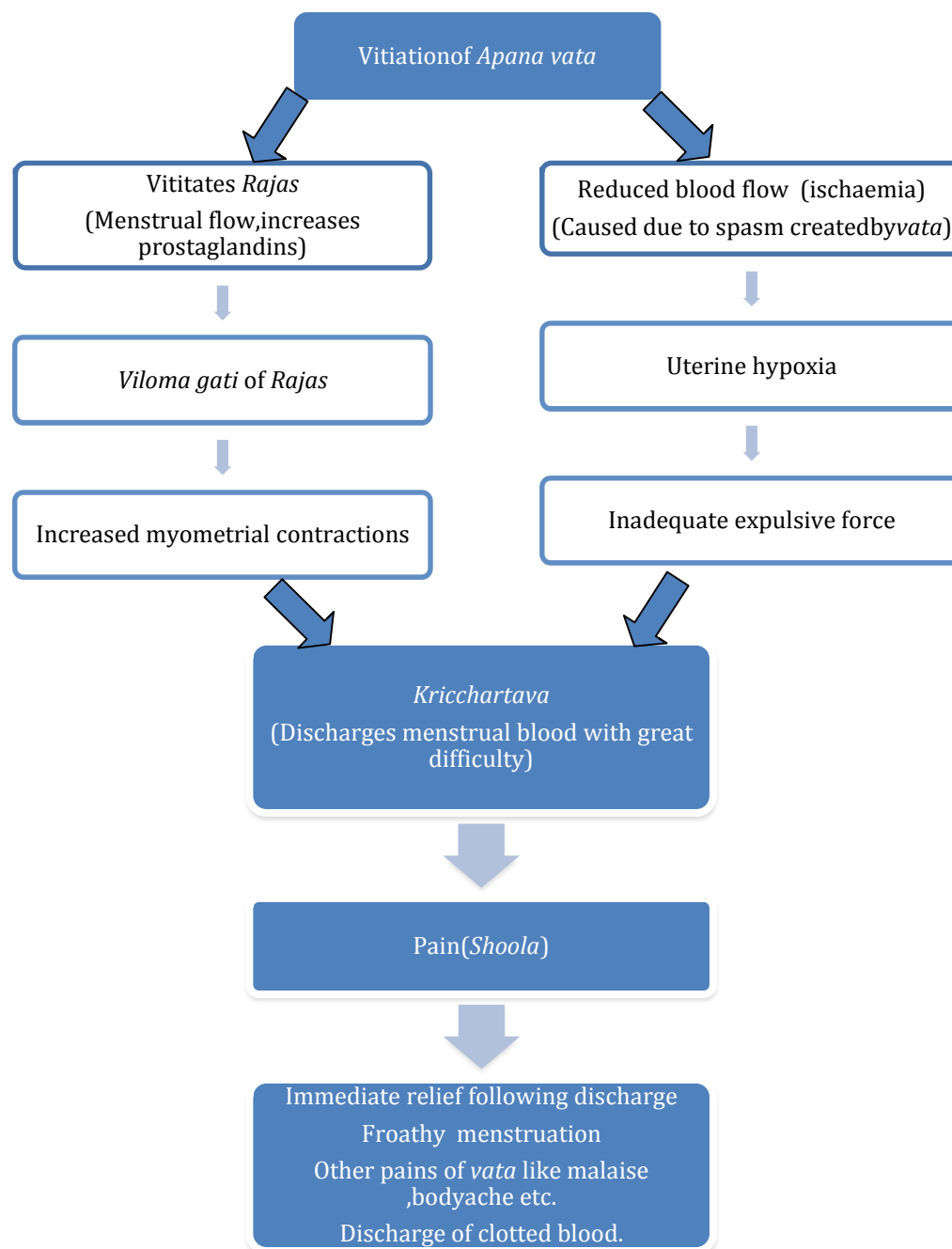
Kashtena:- with great difficulty.

Thus the word *Kashtartava* can be expressed as :- "*Kashtenamuchyatiiti Kashtartava*" i.e. the condition where *Artava* is shaded with great difficulty and pain is termed as "*Kashtartava*".

According to Ayurveda, due to movement of natural urges in reverse direction, the aggravated *apanavayu* moving in reverse direction fills the uterus. The uterus seized with pain, initially throws or pushes the *raja* (menstrual blood) upwards, then discharges it with spasmodic pain. Ayurveda also describes *Vataja Yonivapad* that oligomenorrhoea associated with dysmenorrhoea caused by *rasdhatukshay* that create general weakness.

Aetiopathogenesis of Dysmenorrhoea:

The aetiopathogenesis of Dysmenorrhoea is as shown in diagram below -



Acharya Charaka has mentioned none of the gynaecological disease can be arise without affliction of aggravated *Vata*. *Vata* is the main responsible factor, though other *doshas* only be present as *Anubandhi* to it. So pain is produced due to vitiation of only *Vata* dosha or in combination with other *Doshas*

Sampraptighataka

Dosha :- *Vatapradhan Tridosha*

Vata :- *Ranjaka, Pachaka*

Kapha :- as *Anubandhita dosha*

Dhatu :- *Rasa, Rakta, Artava*

Upadhatu :- *Artava*

Agni :- *Jatharagni, Rasagni, Raktagni*

Strotasa :- *Rasa, Rakta and Artavavahastrotasa*

Strotodushti :- *Sanga and Vimargagamana*

Udbhavasthana :- *Ampakvashaya*

Rogamarga :- *Abyantara*

Sthana Samshraya :- *Garbhashaya*

Vyaktisthana :- *Garbhashaya*

Various treatment:

Lifestyle changes: Exercise regularly . Ensure sound sleep of at least 6-8hrs. Avoid smoking and alcohol reduce caffeine.

Yoga: in yoga various types of *asanas* have been mentioned among them *Ushtrasana*, *Bhadrasana*, *Gomukhasana*, and *Vajrasana* have a pain relieving effect. "Cat stretch," position, the woman rests on her hands and knees, slowly arching the back. The pelvic tilt is another popular yoga position ,in which the woman lies with knees bent, and then lifts the pelvis and buttocks.

Diet: Eat leafy vegetables. Regularly use ginger in food preparation. avoid fat and sugar. Dietary recommendation to ease cramps include increasing fiber, calcium, and complex carbohydrates, cutting fat, red meat, dairy products, caffeine, salt, and sugar. Recent research suggests that vitamin B supplements, primarily vitamin B6 in a complex ,magnesium , and fish oil supplements also may help relieve cramps.

Ayurvedic treatment: Our ancient *acharyas* has mentioned several classical ayurvedic formulations for the cure of *dysmenorrhoea*. Ayurvedic herbal, classical time tested medicines cures by establishing the equilibrium of *Tridosha* (*vata*, *Pitta* , *Kapha*) and *Saptadhatus*. In treatment of *dysmenorrhoea* balancing of *vata* is most important.

The treatment modalities include *Panchakarma*, external therapies, internal medication, Activities advice of food and lifestyle changes.

Panchkarma-

- *Sneha karma* (oleation) with *Traivrita sneha*.
- *Swedan karma* (hot fomentation).
- Oral use of *Dashamoola ksheera*.
- *Anuvasana basti* (oil enema), *Uttar basti* (intra uterine oil instillation) with *Traivrita sneha*.
- *Swedan* with milk.
- Intake of *sneha* in oral form.
- *Sneha* is in the form of *Anuvasan* and *Uttarbasti*.

Anuvasan basti (Oil enema) is beneficial in normalizing the flow and direction of *apana vayu* (*vata*).

A series of oil and decoction enema are administered to patients, due to which there is a significant reduction in pain and discomfort. therapy including massage is used to relieve any obstructions in the

passage, relieve any spasm, facilitate free movement of *vata* in the proper direction, and enhance a proper menstrual flow.

Uttar basti is a procedure where in medicines are administered inside uterus. This helps in removal of blockages of channels (which provides nutrition to uterus) also it helps to give more nutrition (poshan) to the *garbhashay* (uterus)

Beneficial therapy

- *Basti*
- *Uttar basti*
- *Virechan*
- *Picchu*

CONCLUSION:

Ayurveda view to *dysmenorrhoea* as a *doshic* imbalance that can potentially be impacted through balanced living that is characterized by *dosha* appropriate diet, herbal supplements, exercise, routine, yoga, meditation as well as nourishing inputs through all five senses

It takes a good beneficiary effects from *ayurvedic* remedies to *Dysmenorrhoea*. The coverage to the painful menstruation achievable with the herbal way.

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